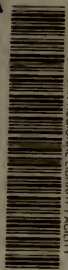


THE   
COCKPIT  
OF IDOLS  
BY MURIEL  
STUART

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**THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS**





# THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS

BY

MURIEL STUART

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TO YOU

AND ALL THAT WE REMEMBER

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## FOREWORD

I WISH to thank Mr. Austin Harrison for his courtesy in allowing me to reprint the following poems that have appeared in *The English Review*: "It's Rose-Time Here . . ." "Bluebell Night," "The Centaur's First Love," "Indictment," and also for his kindness in publishing in 1915 a long poem by an unknown author.



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# THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS

IT'S ROSE-TIME HERE . . .

1918

It's rose-time here . . .

How could the Spring

Be the same merry thing ?

How could she sparkle April's posy-ring

Upon the finger of this widowed year ?

How could she bring

Her gauds so pitilessly near ?

How could she bear

To lead the pomp of May,

The primings and the promises of June

So near, so soon,

In the old happy way ?

How could she dare

To prick the eyes of Grief

With moekeries of returning bud and leaf ?

How could she wear

Such coloured broideries

Beside the tattered garments of despair ?  
Tenting the hills with April's canopies,  
Setting the tulips' spears . . .  
How could she keep her tourneys through  
such tears ?

She did not care . . .  
The roses are as beautiful this year.  
The lily never doffed  
One golden plume, nor did the may renounce  
One thrilling splendour, nor wear one pearl  
less.  
She has not grieved—even a little space—  
For those who loved her once—  
For those whom surely she must once have  
loved.

It's rose-time here . . .  
While over there  
Where all the roses of the world have  
blown  
The blood is not yet dried upon their  
hair,  
Their eyes have scarcely filmed against the  
moon,  
The sun has not yet utterly gone out ;  
Almost the stained grass still  
Is conscious of their breath—  
Those heavenly roses, torn and tossed about  
On the vast plains of Death.

It's rose-time here . . .

(How I shall always hate the Spring  
For being such a calm, untroubled thing.)

While over there

Where there're no children left to pull

The few scared, ragged flowers,

All that was ours, and, God, how beautiful !

All, all, that once was ours

Lies faceless, mouthless, mire in mire,

So lost to all sweet semblance of desire

That we in those fields seeking desperately

One face long-lost to Love,—one face that lies

Only upon the breast of Memory—

Would never know it—even though we stood

Upon its breast, or crushed its dreadful eyes,

Would never find it—even the very blood

Is stamped into the horror of the mud :

Something that mad men trample under foot

In the narrow trench—for these things are

not men—

Things shapeless, sodden, mute

Beneath the monstrous limber of the guns ;

Those things that loved us once . . .

Those that were ours, but never ours again.

It's rose-time here . . .

## THE CENTAUR'S FIRST LOVE

I HUNTED her down the morning,  
Fleet hoof and bosom bare,  
She fled me in swift scorning,  
With her great, golden mane of hair  
Firing the hot, dry, quivering air.  
Down broad, bleached plain, up sunburnt  
hill

She led me, and I followed still.  
She leapt the rock, I caught the gleam  
Of glistening haunches in the stream ;  
Her little murderous hoofs she drove  
Through reed and flower, her hair alone  
With long gold fingers urged me on  
Till I was mad and blind with Love,  
With sun and sleep and sharp desire  
That make the first hours keen as fire,  
And crashing through the blinding light,  
Fiercer than flame, swifter than flight,  
I hunted her down the morning.

I loved the beast in her, the hide  
Sweating and sleek, the heaving side,  
I burned to stifle savagely  
The human mouth that taunted me

From the wild-woman face above ;  
 As on the Isle of Awful Love  
 Pasiphae and the Bull of Crete  
 Tasted strange lips and found them sweet ;  
 I heard, as they heard, for Love's song,  
 The sound of hoofs the whole night long.

I hunted her down the morning !

    She leapt with neighing shrill ;  
 No stream too deep, too high no hill  
 To master such bright scorning :  
 Till where the reeds grew thiek and tall  
 I saw her stumble, sway and fall.  
 But, from her eyes as I drew near  
 Leapt fear, and something more than fear :  
 She did not stir, she did not move,  
 She knew the ancient Sport of Love,  
 She knew me at the side of her.  
 From great gold mane to trembling hoof,  
 The sleek, the tawny hide of her,—  
 All the predestined sweets thereof—  
 Are mine to crush or choke or kill . . .

Kisses grew quicker, closer still,  
 Lip to lip, hoof to hoof we lay . . .  
 The broad bright morning burnt away,  
 The stream went mocking in our ear,  
 We did not see, we did not hear,  
 We did not care, we did not move ;  
 What power could stay the Centaur's Love ?

The glorious chase was all for this,  
More fleet the flight, more fierce the kiss ;  
She knew how doubly sweet would be  
Her last surrender, and to me  
How swift the vengeance on her scorning . . .

And now I lie and laugh with her,  
She will not fly, I shall not stir  
To hunt her down the morning !

## INTERIOR

WHEN I sit down to read at night  
I hear a thousand voices call—  
The painted cups, the mirror bright,  
The crazy pattern on the wall ;

Terrible sounds of woe and strife  
Make thunder through this quiet room,—  
Women who gave the mill their life,  
And men who shuddered at the loom,—

The noise the snarling hammer made  
In maddened ears, the foundry's roar,—  
The woe that stitched this rich brocade,  
That beat this brass, that hewed this door.

How can I read while round me swarm  
Creatures that wept and strove and died  
To make this room, rich, safe and warm,  
To keep the weather-beasts outside ?

How can I rest while in the gloom  
From mine and garret, den and pit,  
They pass, who built in blood this room,  
And with their tears so furnished it !

## TO EACH MAN HIS FEAR

THROUGH reeling night and crumbling day  
You pace the Haunted House of Pain,  
The Thing that marked you for its prey  
Follows you, hides and springs again.

To blinding window, sinking floor,  
Drunken with ether, torn with knife,  
Crazy and blind you lurch once more  
Into the hideousness of Life.

And nothing beautiful nor strong,  
Nor kind, nor fierce, nor vain, nor pure,  
Concerns you,—only this,—how long,  
How much, how well, you may endure.

The fiery brain that dreamed and planned,  
The kissing lips, the restless feet,  
Lie knotted like a dead man's hand,  
And writhe beneath the twisted sheet.

Till to a life that but revolved  
Round a dim night-light's settling blue  
Comes Death, and lays aside, unsolved,  
The foolish riddle that was You !



## THE BASTARD

HERE thou art safe as roses in the bud,—  
Safe from the wind that will not spare the  
    rose ;

Here thou art daily and divinely fed  
    On holy wine and bread

That none deny—my body and my blood—  
I housle thee, myself the sacrament,  
And I am great with thee, as souls with  
    God.

Lie close, in Love's first, safest house lie  
    close,

Blind, breathless, undesirous, and content,  
Hearing my blood sing o'er thee, like a  
    lute,

Feeling my flesh as daisies feel the earth  
Over them, round them, warm and very  
    still . . .

Oh thou art so impatient of thy birth !  
As in her blind hood gropes the daffodil,  
As in the pale flower leaps the rebellious  
    fruit.

Lie still beneath this most unquietest heart,  
For thou a calmer pillow shalt not know

Upon this side of sunset, nor shalt go  
So careless of the steely hearts of men.  
Thou hast the peace that men desire in  
vain—

The quiet men lose and cannot find again ;  
After, thou shalt not find such sweet repose.  
Starlight and moonshine will not say thee  
'Nay,'

Nor the sun question thy divinest right—  
The Password of the Portals of the Day,  
The Freedom of the City of the Night ;  
The orphaned lily, the unfathered rose  
Shall not disdain thy gold, unharmed hair,  
But men shall claim thee their eternal  
prey,

Hunt thee to Death, and hound thee to  
Despair,

Mark thee, and set thee loose, to take again  
As they hunt each forlorn, defenceless  
thing,—

As I am hounded by the hate of men.

For us there is no pardon, pity none  
Of all cold hearts beneath the pitying  
sun,—

Of all cold lips above the pardoning seas.  
Behold us, foes of all Love's enemies,  
With every hand against the hand of Love,  
And we, the slaves of Love's swift tourneying,  
Paying the slow and bitter price thereof.

Lie still awhile ; thy beauty builds my shame !—  
The shame thou dost so innocently bring :  
At thy beseeching blood my blood grows  
tame,

Thy body makes my own most wearisome,  
And with thy kindling lips my lips become  
Colder ; within me something daily dies.

Yet, oh ! most sweet, I do not quarrel  
thee,

For more desired thou art than chastity ;  
Closer thou art than eyelids over eyes,  
Than kissing lips or clasping hands can be ;  
As flame with flame, as tide with tide thou  
art ;

Nearer, much nearer, than myself to me :  
I carry Heaven beneath my labouring heart.

But thou wilt lie no longer than Love lay,  
Thou wilt weary of my body even as he ;  
And I again with body and blood shall pay  
To the last farthing's ruthless penalty  
The nights with Love, the days, the hours  
with thee.

And when at last thy fashioning is o'er,  
When flesh from flesh, when soul from soul,  
goes free,

When Love's poor house can give thee nothing  
more,

And thou break through the wearying bonds  
thereof,

I will seek pardon of thee on my knees,  
And thou ask pity `of God, or stones, or  
trees,  
But not of men—we will ask naught of these—  
I, the loving, and thou the seal of Love.

## THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS

I, God's young priest, went to His House to  
pray.

In the dim church the warm deep-bosomed  
air

Swelled on remembered music, whose last  
note

          Yearned in the organ's throat ;  
Great columns carved in fountain-fall of  
stone

Upheld the dizzy roof on might of spray.

          Beneath the pavement bare  
Slumbered the dead, serenely separate,  
          Too still for praise or prayer,  
          Too wise for love or hate ;

With no more haste to finish or begin,

With no more need to tarry or pursue

Where nothing more is finished or begun.

The nave stood plunged in purple to the chin,

And all the windows stared a solemn blue

Prieked with the golden needles of the sun.

But I thought not on Beauty, but on Sin—

On all the nameless evils dared and done,

For me the dark worm tunnelled in the bud

The moth despoiled the tapestries of rich  
years,  
For me each Dawn was but a vision of tears,  
And every night a winking bowl of blood.

A gentle Christ above the altar stared  
At His mean feast prepared,  
And near the earven Rood  
The Maid—the Mother stood.

I kneeled before her, I who had wept and  
prayed  
Each day and night of my remembering  
years,

Whose youth profane and passionate was  
laid

Beneath the cloisters' celibate still shade,  
And dedicated at the Font of Tears.

But as I kneeled the grim walls seemed to  
fade

Into wet woodlands, and wide, happy leas  
Where lovers with kissed lips and mazy hair  
Went dancing to the stately sound of trees.

Love blew his rapturous bubbles in the air,  
And suddenly for the first wild time I knew  
The strange sweet pang that the hid violet  
knows

When first she dreams of blooming, and how  
the rose

Shivers beneath the sharp, baptismal dew.

I heard the song the thrush one morn would  
sing,  
And knew then what the dumb reed wept to  
say  
Ere Pan had kissed her mouth, I felt that  
day  
The shameless, sweet, unshatterable Spring!  
And suddenly the whole world shook with  
song—  
Music of brooks and birds, of bees and  
showers;  
To the grey fields carolled the rosy flowers;  
The grass's husky, hesitating tongue  
Murmured and ceased; from the remotest  
sea  
Rose, as a tune that hidden minstrels play,  
The water's lyric, the wind's lutany.

Oh! voices, voices, bringing to mine ears  
Your tender torture! Oh! sweet hurt of  
Spring  
Shed all along my veins. Oh! flying fire  
Of passion, of woe, of wildness, of desire;  
The Hound of Love was on the Heel of Youth,  
Beauty came wiling, wooing, whispering,  
And wounded me upon the breast and mouth  
With secret wounds—with kisses sharp as  
spears,  
Sudden as flame, and bright and thick as  
tears,

Yet breathing peace withal, as when one  
 bowers  
 His head upon some dew-begotten dell,  
 And feels his eyelids cold against cold flowers.

How could I pray? Could such lips shape a  
 sigh?

What chalice had this hour to lend to tears?  
 Only the cuckoo's song was in my ears,  
 My dumb voice quickened only to one  
 cry:

“Darest thou listen, Mother-Maid, to me,—  
 Thou who hast listened all these empty years  
 To the slow fall of tears,—

To coward penitence that scarce hath lain  
 Upon thy breast but hears Sin's whistle  
 shrill,

And cries for her old bedfellow again?  
 Hath any paused to offer on his knee  
 A word of love since one for Love's own  
 sake

Gave thee swift, crowded hours of ecstasy,  
 Whose voice above all prayers thou hearest  
 still?

Thou wert a woman to him, thou didst make  
 Each summer mystery plain;

Were not thy clinging hands the wind's un-  
 rest?

Was not thy spread hair thunder on his  
 breast?



Was not thy face the rose, thy tears the rain ?  
Here kneeleth one who loves thee even as  
he ! ”

The day reeled past me, haggarding the  
night,

Then stayed her breath,  
Waiting for an immediate doom to fall  
On one whom none may succour or requite,—  
Doom neither prayer nor pity hindereth.  
The loosened ivy cringed against the wall,

The dusk about me drew  
A closer noose of gloom ; the silence wept ;  
The lights upon the altar lapsed and leapt  
In gusts of gold and blue.

From the night's caravan a beggar-wind  
Crept up and listened at the door  
Like some poor outcast creature that hath  
sinned

And dareth home no more,  
But listens to old songs round the old hearth,  
Wondering if his forbidden name one saith,  
If one be sad, remembering. Then I heard—  
Lower than pipe of an entranced bird

That shakes a dewy wing  
On glittering boughs at sunrise, venturing  
Against hushed lips of dawn his perilous  
flute—

The stumble soft of unaccustomed speech  
That patience or despair hath long made mute,

Sad as sea-sounds in most forlornest shells  
 Scattered upon a tide-forsaken beach,  
 Wherein the murmur of the far sea dwells.

“ I hear thy plea, my wild one ! Have thy  
 prayers

Led thee to me for this ?

And have I so mis-read thy daily vows ?  
 My silence, hath it seemed a sinful ‘ Yea ’ ?  
 Hast thou but beaten dedicated brows  
 Against the feet of Lust, and in my house  
 Profaned me, deeming me to be enticed  
 By snare of service, and by bait of prayer  
 Into Sin’s meshes ? Wouldst thou father  
 Christ ? ”

“ Lady, thy children were not all of God ;

Thy gentle feet have trod

The path of Love, thy bosom well hath known

Its blossoms and its bowers,

Thy mouth hath crushed its fruit ; oh ! thou  
 hast grown

Into my soul as sun grows into flowers,

As the sea rolls into the sunset’s shell.

Thou dwellest in me as the Host doth  
 dwell

Within the Cup, but also dwelleth there

That other ancient Spirit of the Vine

Torched on the hills, laughing and quiek with  
 wine,

Pursuing Ariadne as she flies  
Through the dim woods, the fountain of her  
hair  
Blown backwards in warm gold against the  
air,  
Its bubbles sparkling at his lips and eyes.  
Thou art the beaker that Bacchantes  
bring—  
And thine the cup whence Mænades caroused,—  
The vine upon a thousand hill-sides sunned,  
The warm bright grape their amorous bodies  
bruised ! ”

I heard my words rush past me thundering,  
As one who on the lonely mountain hears  
The deep abysses groan their agonies,—  
The ridge make sharp her merciless strong  
spears,  
And hears the awful hammer of the ice  
Break the great crags in shards about his  
ears !

But as I kneeled and shuddered, sound of  
feet  
Sighed in the aisle, and lingered and grew  
close.  
One kneeled by me—an outcast of the  
street—  
A creature wan as June's last lovely rose

That, following forsaken summer fades  
 Slowly through nights of rain, and days of  
 drouth—

A graveless ghost, whom sleep in vain per-  
 suades,

Whom merey may not save, nor pity  
 stir,

Wearing the harlot's rose on cheek and  
 mouth,

With all her pitiful hair spilled over her.

She leanced towards me, a few words stammer-  
 ing—

Learned lesson of the streets so glibly  
 spoken!—

The priest in me leaped out and smote her  
 there,

“Darest thou plead, poor, painted Folly,  
 broken

Across the knees' of those thou once didst  
 snare?

Shall Love be borne upon a vulture's wing?

Shall paper roses bear

The burden of the Spring?

Canst thou set all the sunrise in a ring?

What whip shall scourge the trafficker that  
 sells

Such shameful wares within the House of  
 God

Where Holiness hath its august abode,

Denied the gold by which thou art grown  
rich ?

Behold above us where God's Mother  
dwells. . . ."

Darkness alone stood in the empty niche.

" Son, for whom died my Son, I have come  
down !

I am the terrible answer to thy kiss.

Behold the graven image overthrown ;

Passion at last brings all its gods to this.

What ware is sold more shameful than thine  
own,

What harlot's house is more profaned than  
mine,

Whose priests forswear the solemn vows  
they made,

In whose hands broken is indeed the bread,

And for whose sins shall blush the holy  
wine ? "

As in some vast and desperate agony,

On torn lips furrowed by the Plough of Pain,

A meaningless word within all words be knit,

Repeated till all sense be gone from it,

And it mean naught, and beat upon a brain

Long crazed and without fear, I spake again :

" Wert thou more faithful to thy God than  
I ?

Mary, for Him wert thou inviolate ?

Didst thou for Him all other loves deny,  
 Forsworn thy lips, thy body celibate  
 To Him who made thy breast His Sanctuary ?  
 For I have never turned aside to slake  
 My thirst on Folly's fruit or Pleasure's wine ;  
 I think no other woman had been mine  
 After thy hair had swept me ! For thy  
     sake

I had been only, and for ever thine.  
 Yea, I had swiftly died upon thy kiss—  
 Death flying in straight splendour to such  
     mark—

Not as a beggar to the house of alms,  
 Not in a narrow bed with hasty rite,  
     And sudden hush of psalms,  
 But as a great white Day goes out at night  
 Upon the splendid venture of the Dark ! ”

So spake I, and fell weeping, closelier drew  
 Until my brow against her feet was laid,  
 Fell on my ears, as on shut flowers the dew,  
     The swift sad words she said.

“ I, too, was but a weapon in God's hand—  
 Human like thee—a weapon and a sign  
 Misread of men ; in every human breast  
     God lays Him down to rest  
 Until the earthly cast forth the divine.  
 None sainted me : did I at my Son's feet  
     With other Marys sit ?

Was my forgotten hair beloved or blessed  
As Magdalen's? Did I not ever stand  
Aside, apart, forgotten and alone?  
What word had Mark or Luke the Evangelist  
For her whom God made Mother of His Son?  
Why shouldst thou worship where they bowed  
no knee?

“ O Son, O Wild One, thou hast brought  
even me

Into thy soul's arena. All men turn  
Their unseen gods to graven images,  
Each man the idol of his choosing leads  
That in the Cockpit of men's brutal creeds  
Each god may bleed and burn,  
Till frailer ones be fallen on their knees,—  
Sweet gods soon broken upon the spears of  
Youth,

Soon silenced at the knee of Sophistry,  
Till Earth's eyes with the lust of battle dim,  
Till gaping Hell be bubbled to the brim,  
And Heaven grow grey against a dead god's  
mouth.

Yea, Zeus and Christ in the great lists are  
flung,

Dagon and Vishnu face to face are thrust,  
Pallas Athene tourneys with the dust;  
God of the North above whose throne were set  
The golden shields, Isis of Egypt sung,  
Meet only where all dying gods have met!

There shudders the moon-goddess Ashtoreth ;  
 The Syrian, and the Cyprian, fall on death ;  
 Olympus, Asgard and Gethsemane,  
 Vigil of Paphos and of Olivet !  
 And while these gods in the great shambles  
     dic,

    Thrust on each other's spears,  
 He, nameless and unchallenged, wanders by  
     In every tree that peers  
 Into the wizard darkness of the hill,  
 And in each tarn most deeply contemplates  
 The image of His beauty, lingers still  
 To twist again the purpled clover's ears,  
     World-weary feet He cools  
 Where windless noons lie bathing in the pools,  
     Or takes His solitude  
 Where, in the purple cloak of twilight, waits  
 The moon to pierce the solitary wood.

The God who made the world and found it  
     good  
 When the great pageant of six days rolled by,  
 Who fired the laughing splendour of the  
     blood,  
 Painted the dawn, and laid the starry floors,  
 And led the amazed moon across her sky,—  
 Who wrestled with the thunder and the  
     night,—  
 Who heard the first seas singing up the shores,  
 And saw the first fields blush in the first light.



Deny no more the spirit of delight,  
No more thy brother's image erueify.  
In every home thou hast bid men wateh him  
die,  
And earved the moment of his agony.  
Thou hast given us the Eternal load to bear,  
The burden of the outcast and forlorn,  
Give us the gift of laughter, not of prayer,—  
The joy His Mother had when He was born,  
And bid the wounded brow of Jesus wear  
The rose and not the thorn.”  
She ceased. Upon my brow's cold earthli-  
ness  
Faltered the stainless petals of her kiss,  
While all the fluttering pinions of the air  
Made ready as if to bear  
An infinite impalpable foot thereon.  
No trump declared her, but the air was  
sweet  
With crooked croon of doves,—with brooks  
that run  
Laughter and tears together,—with buds  
that greet  
With freckled faces the kisses of the sun.  
All saddest things went gathered to her  
breast,—  
The foundling sorrow, and the grief that goes  
To the lean bosom any hireling bares  
When the heart's house is swept for Pleasure's  
heirs,

And Life's broad bed another lover knows.  
 My old despairs, old sorrows and old fears  
 She took, as from the wide fields' palimpsest  
 Sunlight blots out the legend of the snows  
 For Spring's green name, while April dries her  
     tears  
 To prick the warm bright eyelids of the rose.

Dawn made a sudden crescent curve of flame  
 Above the world, as o'er Endymion  
 Arched in a trembling splendour, Dian came,  
 The moon behind her, and before the sun,  
 The Orient with her thundery hair distraught,  
 The dying West still troubled at her feet,  
 And the dark world beneath her chained and  
     caught  
 In the gold net where Night and Morning  
     meet.

Never was Spring so longed for as this  
     Spring—  
 My Spring so long delayed and come at  
     last—  
 A child despaired of, overmuch desired,  
 Born in the winter of Love when grown too  
     old  
 Has seemed the body and the lips too cold,  
 The hands, the heart too tired  
 For further fashioning.  
 Oh! never had the heart's first celandine

Unhooded her so slowly from the green,  
Never before had stately shaft and plinth  
Been built so slowly by the hyacinth ;  
Never had any captive fled so fast  
From the grim haunted tower of solitude,  
Never had leapt to such shrill trumpet blast  
The prisoned pulse or marched the daunted  
blood !

I loosed the bonds, I watched the idols fall,  
From the dark shrine I went out, sane and  
free,

Creedless and unforbidden to serve and see  
The unknown, only God within us all.  
Men seemed no more the legionaries of lust,  
Women no more their pleasure or their  
prey,—

Lost creatures blown from frail, alluring  
dust,

And doomed to slow corruption and decay.  
Something so lovely, pitiful and wise,  
Something so infinite crowned the finite  
whole !

I saw the unshatterable temple of each soul,  
I heard their laughter as the wind that blows  
Wider the thrilling rose,  
And felt their tears like rain, their sweat like  
dew.

I saw God die a thousand deaths and rise  
In triumph from each yawning sepulchre,  
And Summer's hair was gold beneath His feet.

Then lo ! She passed before me, and I knew  
I might have found, loved, healed and hallowed  
her

In every violet-seller by the wall,  
In pavement-saints, Madonnas of the Shawl,  
In Magdalen's hair, in Martha's ministry,  
Wherever women's heads were blessed or  
bowed ;

I walked with God in every noisy street,  
And saw in every creature that passed by  
Christ go forth too and mingle with the  
crowd.

## THE SECOND-HAND BOOKSTALL

ON a stall they shiver now,  
Huddled in the dust and rain,—  
A forlorn and tattered row,  
Like the castaways of men.

A profound green library  
Held them once, serene and close,  
Where a sonnet's lips were dry  
With the blood of some dead rose.

Dirty hands and furtive eyes  
Touch, profane them where they lie,  
And a ticket shows the price  
Of such immortality !

Dust is deep on Marlowe's lip,  
Hell holds Dante in these streets,  
Milton takes the gutter's drip,  
Mud is on the breast of Keats.

All the lovely thoughts men think,  
All their rapture, love and pain,—  
God come down in blood and ink,—  
Sold for sixpence in the rain !

TO —

WHEN I grow old and my quick blood is  
chilled,

And all my thoughts are grey as my grey hair,  
When I am slow and dull, and do not care,  
And all the strife and storm of Life are stilled ;  
Then if one carelessly should speak your  
name

It will go through my body like swift spears  
To set my fireless bosom in a flame,  
My faded eyelids will be bright with tears ;  
And I shall find how far my heart has gone  
From wanting you,—how lost and long ago  
That love of ours was : I shall suddenly know  
How old and grey I am . . . and how alone.

## THE SLAVE

THE Sins, the Joys, the Sorrows of the Soul  
Sat down to feast, and He was bidden wait  
Upon them,—He who wore an aureole  
About His brows, while they washed hands  
and ate,  
Plucked fruit and spices from the costly  
plate,  
And drained the black wine from the lordly  
bowl.

Twelve guests of God they sat at meat ; each  
guest  
Closest to him he loved ; lean Treachery  
Spilled salt and moved Pride's eyelid with a  
jest,  
Repentance, scarcely daring to reply,  
Sat with wan cheek half-turned from Chastity,  
But Love—Love wept against the Servant's  
breast.

Young Hope and Fear clung, dove-like breasts  
together  
Near Joy and Grief with wild and gentle eyes ;  
Courage, a bird that flies in every weather,

Refused to count his scars for Pity's sighs ;  
 Lust crouched and tossed red meats and  
     savouries  
 To his gaunt hounds that whinnied at their  
     tether.

With pity infinite the Slave leaned down  
 Serving them Folly's wine, and Pleasure's  
     meat,  
 And when cups yawned, and broken fruits  
     lay brown  
 He, rising, took rough linen and water sweet  
 And kneeled and washed those erring Masters'  
     feet,  
 And drew their gold and broidcred sandals on.

Joy fled ; Love cried : " Lord, serv'st thou  
     such as they ? "  
 Hope, Fear and Sorrow chorused Pity's  
     sigh ;  
 But Pride thrust forth his feet, and Lust said :  
     " Yea, "  
 Courage was shamed ; aghast stood Chastity ;  
 Repentance with wild hair wept : " Thus  
     did I ! "  
 And Treachery kissed the Slave and went  
     away.

By some forgotten, and by some denied,  
 By all forsaken, from that banquet-hall



The Slave went forth, Love weeping at his  
side,  
And for the Body's sins, for those who fall  
Because of it—for Love's sake most of all—  
After their feast the Slave was crucified.

## ÉTAPLES

“ÉTAPLES,” what does it mean ?  
Is it the name of a town ?  
Fields where the wild flowers blow,  
A hill where the brooks run down ?

*Is it a town to us ?—  
A field where the jonquils grow ?  
Is it a hill where the streams  
Run laughing ? We do not know.*

“Étapes,”—a strange, vague word  
Spelled on the lips of the guns  
Where all that our wild hearts loved  
Went through with the regiment once !

## COMMON FIRES

THE fern and flame had fought and died  
together,  
From fading frond the failing smoke crept  
grey,  
The heath drew close her old brown shawl of  
heather,  
And turned her face away.

To-day the bee no bell of honey misses,  
The birds are nesting where the bracken  
lies  
Green, tranquil, deep, quiet as dreams or  
kisses  
On weary lips and eyes.

The heath has drawn the blackened threads  
together,  
My heart has closed her lips upon old pain,  
But somewhere, in my heart and in the  
heather,  
No bud shall grow again.

TO —

COME back no more : nothing is left us now :  
Let us forget ; let us go back, go soon  
To the old loves we left, and crave the boon  
Of their old kindness, nor remember how  
Your hands burnt in my hands,—how wild,  
    how dear  
Those hours were once, that now forgotten  
    are,  
Let this thing be as far as love is far,  
Yea, let this be as things that never were.

Though it have altered all that used to be,  
Have changed our earth, and brought strange  
    wave and weed  
Into our fields, and smart and smell of sand  
From waters that have never known the  
    land ;  
Though on our tides have burned rich scent  
    and seed  
From gardens that were strangers to the sea.

Come back no more : what is there but to find  
This rose's flaw in every other rose ?  
To taste in all fruit this fruit's bitter rind,

To breathe these ashes on each wind that  
blows ?

Was it for this we pledged a thousand vows,  
And by eternal kisses swore our faith—  
This dearest of dead things that lies beneath  
The stretched sheet in Life's latched and  
shuttered house ?

What word is there to bring it ? No word  
more ;

It would not hear though we had words to  
say,

Though we had tears to shed, or prayers to  
pray.

Leave to this dead its dark, and close this  
door . . .

It was not Love that we brought here to die,  
Let us go back, go by.

## INDICTMENT

IN women is it Chastity you prize?—  
The unapproachable white purities,—  
The vestal moon forsworn of celibate skies,  
The ice that spurns remote and barren seas?  
Can Chastity cool your kisses, slake your  
sighs?  
And when, at last, o'ertaken and embraced,  
We give you burning lips, wild words and  
eyes,  
In your arms lying, would you have us chaste?

If it were Chastity filled your treasuries,  
Possession would be Prize instead of Prey.  
You would be wise and clean, and we should  
go  
Free of your lusts and importunities,  
Nor trace the dubious paths we take to-day  
From your first, careless footsteps in the  
snow.

## BLUEBELL NIGHT

WHEN Earth stands trembling on the brink  
of June

Spring reads the writing on the sunset's wall,  
And 'Farewell' on the bright page of the  
moon,

While the winds lute a faint memorial.

She hears Night toll the hour of her fare-  
well,

And seeks once more a breast whereon to  
die,—

In the last wood to yield to Summer's  
spell,

That still dreams on with wide and tranquil  
eye

When June the mighty huntress rakes the  
sky

And sows the world with heat,—still sees its  
cool

Green image peering o'er the enchanted pool.

Past the low track where many a groaning  
cart

Has lurched above the beating of Spring's  
heart

She fleets, June's arrows falling swift and  
bright :

The creening curlew-wind wails, following,  
The old wheel-wounds are filled with flowers  
to-night.

Her reels of gold, blue skein and yellow bead,  
Fall from her hand as wild and white she  
goes,

The poppy lacking still a golden thread,  
Her needle pricking still the unfinished rose.

To-night the bluebells die, already wan  
With prescience of her whose death is theirs :  
A sheathing wing the solemn thicket bears,

    Though heedless birds sing on,  
Though through the listening moonlight  
wanders still

The wide-lipped water talking in her sleep,  
    And far beyond the hill,

Across the heaven's golden, vast divide,  
The twilight rose nods to the lily moon ;

    Too old, too wise to weep,  
They watch where Spring has fallen, and see  
her swoon

With the long spear of Summer in her side.

The lean swift bramble hastens o'er the  
stones,—

A gipsy Autumn makes an emperor  
Splendoured in purple, glorious in gold ;



The young wild trees whom she may tend no  
more  
Forget their cradle-songs in April's house,  
And on Earth's shoulders take a mighty  
hold,  
Against the sun spread vast pavilions,  
And stun the great storms with huge, thunder-  
ous brows.  
While from Spring's dying hand the jewels  
fall ;  
The hawthorn folds her frail embroidery,  
The drowsy hyacinth puts out her light,  
Gold-throated flowers that lured the pirate  
bee  
Fade like old dreams across the face of  
night,  
Of whom stern Day forbids memorial.

Something of Spring must die in us to-night—  
Something the full-lipped Summer may not  
know,—  
The sharp, sad rapture, the impetuous flight  
That finds all heavens too near, all heights  
too low ;  
When Dawn seems but a glittering rose to  
throw  
To a mad world, and from Youth's beakers  
flow  
The keen, the sparkling Daysprings of De-  
light !

But not for ever ! All that died to-night  
Has heard one same sweet word, and knows  
that Change

Though seeming wild and strange,—  
Seeming to stamp its heel on all delight,  
And giving Beauty only grace to die,  
Shall bring a rich to-morrow ; though Spring  
lie

Dead as the first faith in Youth's sepulchre,  
She shall return, and glide,—

A white swan moving on the green Spring-  
tide :

A snowdrop soon shall quicken in her side,  
And round her lips a little sigh shall stir . . .  
While loud December stamps the frozen ways  
Leave her to dreamless nights and deedless  
days,

And strew the paling bluebells over her !

## HELIODORE

Who will remember Heliodore ?  
The nightingales, the nightingales  
That sing to-night in vain for thee  
Whose nights no singing shall restore ?  
The myrtle that in vain hath shed  
Bloom for thy bridal feet to tread  
That wander dim and sunless vales,  
Far off, too far for Love and me ?  
What music hath Persephone,  
What woodland glade, what balmy grove  
To bower sweet birds in lutany ?  
What lip or lyre speaks low in Love  
Where grey ghosts after and before  
Weave thee a mournful canopy  
Of hemlock grim and hellebore ?  
This is thy maiden company,  
These are thy roses, Heliodore.

Who will remember Heliodore ?  
No rain of Autumn's weaving  
On Twilight's loom with shuttle slow ;  
No plaint of sad birds' grieving  
Makes of thy name a deeper woe.

The earth that holds thee tranced and deep  
In Death's long tyranny of sleep  
Will not remember Heliodore.

For thou wilt be no more to her  
Than dust of ferns, or shades that stir  
The sands on Lethe's long cold shore,  
Than crumbling bones of beast or bird,  
Than perfume vague of musk or myrrh  
Clinging round lip of shell or sherd ;  
Those eyes, that strange gold flame of hair,  
Shall be to her as Helen's were—  
Dust in the dust—she will not care  
If these sweet limbs and lips be those  
Of fawn or flowers or dryad, nor  
Discern thy beauty from the rose,  
Nor thee from lilies, Heliodore.

Who will remember Heliodore ?  
Not this sea, not this shore ;  
Not this forgetting wind and tree :  
The dreaming land will wait once more  
The sighing, swift, desirous sea ;  
To-morrow's sun will take the moon,  
To-morrow's bloom will burn the bee ;  
The days will give the sweet days' boon  
To Midnight's savage empery.  
The silver sails will fret the morn  
For the pale Pleiades' return ;  
Atys will woo Aurora's kiss  
In the tall woods : the Dryades

Will woo their fauns, and Hippoerene  
Will wait the noon to dance between  
The white feet of Melpomene,—  
But not for thine, but not for thee !

Who will remember Heliodore ?  
What if my heart remember thee  
In Thessaly ? What lyre have *I*  
To trance Alecto's furious hair ?  
What ghost shall see thee gliding by  
To laughter and to love once more—  
To the old mortal days that were ? . . .  
I cannot wake thee, Heliodore.  
A day, a year, and I shall be  
As unremembering as they  
Who share thy sweet oblivion.  
Silence and song shall be as one,  
Moonset as sunrise, night as day,  
Rivers as rocks, and stars as stones :  
And the last flower may cease to grow,  
The last bird sing, the last wind blow,—  
I shall not heed, I shall not know  
That thou wert, or that I was, once.

In vain, in vain shalt thou implore  
Thine old song's rapture, Heliodore.  
Oh ! Love, Love, loved immeasurably !—  
Sweet, only Splendour lived and shed  
Through all my singing, thou shalt see

How far, how utterly at last  
Art thou from all Remembrance cast  
When Love himself forgetteth thee,  
And these, thy lips, can sing no more,—  
When I am dead as thou art dead,  
Dumb as thy dumb mouth, Heliodore.

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